



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

HOW SHALL PUPILS BE TAUGHT TO ESTIMATE THEMSELVES ?¹

PRESIDENT W. J. TUCKER
Hanover, N. H.

I believe that it is a part of the function of the school, in the development of character, to teach or to help pupils to think rightly about themselves; but I do not quite like to call this part of our work the art of self-estimation.

Nothing, as we very well know, is more delicate than training in character, and the most sensitive, if not the most elusive, part of this training begins when we try to bring the mind of the individual scholar to bear upon himself. You can say to one, "Do this," or, "Do that," and trust to the effect of the doing upon character; but you cannot say to one, "Think so and so about yourself," and expect a like tangible result. You are dealing in the one case, within the fixed region of duty; you are dealing, in the other case, within the free realm of personality, which, even in a child, quickly asserts its freedom. I do not mean that we must act, in such a matter as this, vaguely; but I do mean that we must act under restraints and limitations. We cannot plan to take this part of the kingdom of heaven by violence. We must at least stop short of the state of mind of the man variously located in the bustling towns of the frontier: "We haven't got 'round to culture yet, but when we do get 'round to it, we'll make culture hum."

There are two periods in life of which we feel the charm—the period of unconsciousness, and the period of simplicity. Unconsciousness is the birthright of the child; simplicity is the final result possible to a man. Unconsciousness and simplicity are very far apart in time—the whole struggle of a lifetime may intervene; but they are very much alike in their effect upon us. When we are in the presence of persons who have passed beyond all affectation and assumptions,

¹ Read at the Conference of Elementary and Secondary Schools at Dartmouth College.

and all excitements of impatience, into the repose of power, as expressed in manner and in speech, we are as much at home with them as we are with children. The charm of their simplicity is upon us.

Now, the period of unconsciousness cannot be indefinitely prolonged, any more than one can expect to prolong the stage of mere innocence. As soon, therefore, as we are obliged to part company in any degree with the unconsciousness of the child, we must begin, it seems to me, to train toward simplicity. The end may be a long way off, and it may be reached only through a good many inconsistencies and contradictions; but there is no other end worth striving after as the expression of the individual life, especially of its power and virtue. Unconsciousness is the divine hint of that far greater end which we are to work out, each for himself, as the expression of his nature.

How shall we effect, or begin to effect, the transition from unconsciousness to simplicity? As we take those coming to us, who have never thought much about themselves, but who are being forced in so many ways to think of themselves, how shall we gradually teach them so to think that they may reach that expression of themselves so much greater than unconsciousness, namely, simplicity?

Apparently this is a problem peculiar to modern education. The supreme fact of modern life is publicity. The life of the home is open. The nursery is anywhere in the house, or on the piazza. The child knows everybody, and is known of everybody, within the ordinary social range of the family. The school represents the next course in publicity, not simply because it brings so many together, but because it has become one of the easier places to exploit. Our schools are within immediate reach of the press. Reporters have their school assignments. Nothing which is unusual, and therefore interesting to the public, is allowed to escape. And the usual thing, if of interest like athletics, has its regular space.

I am not calling up this fact of publicity to denounce it or to complain of it, but to state it as the circumstance in which we must train for character. As between modern publicity with all its glare, and mediæval privacy, as it was then, or as it may still linger with its dank atmosphere, I prefer to take my chance as a teacher and

as a parent in the world of today. But we may make too many concessions to publicity; we are making too many concessions to it; perhaps I should say, in many cases, sacrificing to it. The doctrine which I would have preached up and down through our schools and colleges to all within is: Accept yourselves; not, Assert yourselves. The chief mark of academic power, from the least unto the greatest, ought not to be that it is most in evidence, and the chief aim of academic striving ought not to be, to be most in evidence.

What is the immediate object which we are to keep in view from first to last in teaching our pupils how to think rightly of themselves? I will answer the question negatively, because the negative aspect of the question is nearer and more urgent than the positive. We are to strive by all means to prevent them from falling into the habit of thinking of themselves in terms of second values. We have to meet here an almost inevitable tendency. It is the secondary estimates of personal life with which the child becomes familiar at the outset. They are the estimates which most of the people whom the child knows are entertaining. In many homes they are the sufficient and satisfying estimates. I think that the greatest moral function of our public schools, and of our great private schools, is the correction of social standards, which, if not corrected, will declare themselves in the reduced or perverted lives of the children of the nation. I believe that the average school is more critical of standards of character than the average home. In the first place, the average teacher thinks more about the development of character than the average parent. His mind is more steadily occupied with thoughts which are germane to character. He is not so immediately concerned with questions of material or social success. In the second place, the teacher deals with standards where the parent deals with situations. He is not called upon to make so many practical variations from his standards, which in the end become demoralizing. And, in the third place, the school has the decided advantage over the home in the way of moral impression, in the fact that you can impress the one through the many, better than you can impress one alone. The moral sentiment of a school, once created, is a constant and a saving force. It comes nearer than anything of which I am aware to realizing the idea of "salvation by fellowship."

The school, then, can do much to stay the tendency of its pupils to think of themselves in terms of second values. By its command of their time it can prevent many of them from committing themselves to insufficient and unsatisfying employments. Probably one-half of those who remain in school till eighteen or twenty make very different decisions in regard to their life-work, from those which they were ready to make at fourteen; and in nearly every case the delay is immensely to their advantage, as well as to the advantage of society. The natural growth of ideals within this period is away from the superficial. I think that "success" even is not quite so big a word at twenty-one as it is at some earlier stages; or, if it be still the ruling word, it has to do with objects of larger and more enduring values.

Meanwhile, what is the process through which this advance in the right estimation of self is made, if it is normal and genuine? Certainly, it is not at the beginning through introspection. Introspection, wherever it still exists within the limits of school life, is a relic of mediævalism. It does not start out of the conditions of the modern world. It is still true, as Tennyson sings, that—

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power;

but they are not realized today through introspection. The world of the average schoolboy or schoolgirl is altogether an objective world, with the great objective virtues in the foreground—reverence, obedience, honor, generosity, charity. I think that Mr. Rhodes has expressed the modern spirit in its moral aspect in two of the personal requirements for the Rhodes scholarship. After prescribing proficiency in scholarship and in athletics, he adds (III) "qualities of manhood, true courage, devotion to duty, protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness, and fellowship; and (IV) the exhibition during school days of moral force of character, and of instincts to lead, and to take an interest in his schoolmates; for those latter attributes will be likely in after-life to guide him to esteem the performance of public duties as the highest aim."

There are three influences coming out of school life, through which, in the order of today, the schoolboy is learning how to think of himself. These influences we can direct or modify, and in so doing we contribute, I think, our most effective aid in developing the art

of self-estimation. These three influences are: first, the reflex influence from association to the degree of comradeship; second, the reflex influence from work; and, third, the direct influence of the teacher, growing out of his estimation of the individual scholar.

First, the reflex influence from companionship. I have spoken of the sentiment of a school as a factor in the development of individual character. I note a change which has taken place in this regard, largely within the past decade, that, whereas the school of the earlier times was repressive of individuality, the school of the present time stimulates individuality. The change is healthful, but it requires on the part of the master more careful and tactful dealings with some scholars. The change has led some boys and girls to the premature announcement of themselves, usually in uncomfortable, sometimes in bad, ways. A position is taken from which it is difficult to recede. School reputation is quickly made, and then, as elsewhere, one has the reflex influence from it. The word is attributed to Lord Byron—I have never been able to verify it: “Men took me to be what I said I was, and I came to be what they thought I was.”

A wise master, of course, never takes a prematurely bad boy at his word, nor is he too eager to take school rumors about bad boys. Anyone who has made a false estimate of himself, and has established a reputation upon it, has greatly complicated his case as a matter of school discipline, but he is still entitled to treatment according to the insight of the teacher.

The reflex influence from companionship rests upon the principle that our estimate of ourselves is determined largely by our behavior toward others. This at least is the way the principle works through good behavior. A man who acts with courtesy comes to think of himself as a gentleman, as being, that is, under the obligations of a gentleman. Unfortunately, a man who does brutal things does not thereby come to think of himself as a brute. It is enough, however, that the principle works toward the good. And the school is the place above all others where the principle works for the good most effectively. I think that a sensitive and honorable schoolboy grows upon himself, through the growing thought of himself, faster than any other person. The more he thinks of himself in relation to others, the more he scorns the mean or careless thought of himself

which lets in the mean or careless act. Gradually he becomes, in a perfectly simple and natural way, representative of the best things for which the school stands. He almost seems to be responsible for its best life.

I had a charming illustration a little time ago of this representative and responsible quality in a boy's life. I was the guest, at the recent inauguration of Dr. Alderman at the University of Virginia, of a family in which there were two boys, eight and six years old. The little fellows, each in his own way, played the part of host, simply, naturally, sincerely. I was their guest as much as I was the guest of their father and mother. They were thoroughly imbued with the spirit for which the home stood, that of a most gracious hospitality.

It is entirely possible for the spirit of a school to possess a boy as naturally as the spirit of the home possessed these two little southern gentlemen. Mr. Goschen said at the unveiling of the statue of Thomas Hughes at Rugby: "He was the most distinguished school-boy that ever lived." It was the fine distinction of Thomas Hughes that he made that same distinction possible to the schoolboys of England and America. School life is full of opportunity. Think of the immediate opportunity in athletics! School and college sentiment has given the athlete the place of honor. He has displaced the scholar, the debater, every other type of the superior fellow. What return can he make for so great a recognition? He can try to think of himself in absolute terms of honor and integrity. He can put aside all claims for any other kind of reward. He can refuse to lend himself to any dishonorable or questionable practices. He can do what rules cannot do—he can make athletics perfectly clean and free from all commercialism, by simply thinking of himself only in terms of absolute honesty and honor.

In passing from the reflex influence of companionship to the reflex influence from work, we see at once that the influence from work is less active, and much more subtle; but it is very real. Take the matter of the quality of work referred to so vividly by Professor Adams. Is it not clear that a boy who forms the habit of doing two-thirds of a boy's work will in time come to think of himself as two-thirds of a man, at least for all practical purposes? Will he not find himself saying, when the chance of a full man comes to him: "No, I am not equal to it; that is, I am not the full man"?

But we are concerned especially with the effect of the change in the subject-matter of school work upon school ideals. Every child today is educated as a modern. Even among the relatively small number trained in the subject-matter of the ancient classics the method of training is so essentially modern that the subject-matter becomes secondary. The child of today, no matter what he is studying, is no longer a child of the past. His ideals are not there. Plutarch's heroes are not his heroes. His daily work lacks at least that kind of idealism. It does not stimulate him to think of himself in the larger terms of other men's lives. Modern education waits the distinctly idealizing process, and therefore the distinctly idealizing influence.

The new subject-matter is in large degree the raw material of knowledge, not having passed through the alchemy of time, devoid of sentiment, lacking in those associations which make up the moral increment of knowledge. It represents literatures which have not reached the final form, sciences which run straight to application rather than to philosophical conclusion, and theories of society and government which are too serious and urgent to be held in academic discussion.

But the new subject-matter of knowledge is powerful nevertheless, subtle enough to create an atmosphere, and tangible enough to create an environment. Mr. A. J. Balfour has used a term which expresses with rare exactness one of the relations of the new knowledge to our thinking. It has created, he says, a new "mental framework." I quote the brief passage which holds this definition. In an address upon "The Nineteenth Century" he remarks that it is not the distinction of this century

that it has witnessed a prodigious and unexampled growth in our stock of knowledge. Something much more important than this has happened. Our whole point of view has altered. The mental framework in which we arrange the separate facts in the world of men and of things is quite a new framework. The spectacle of the universe presents itself now in a wholly changed perspective: we not only see more, but we see differently.

Yes, we are seeing differently way down to childhood, and, as I believe, we are beginning to see with clearer, and I hope with finer, vision; but we are not yet getting the reflection of ourselves as we must have it for the best knowledge of ourselves. If we are to get personal results out of science, we must make science a culture as

well as a utility. I do not say this in the language of academic snobbery. We must go on in our work of the schools, creating the child of the shop and the child of the market-place; but we may also, if we are capable, create out of this same child of the shop and of the market-place the child of nature and of the new humanity.

I come to the direct influence of the teacher, the master, at this one point, namely, in aiding the pupil to estimate himself. How direct and continuous and cumulative is the influence of the teacher! It passes from point to point as the pupil advances, never lessening, never losing its obligation, never satisfied, but expressing itself in new and more delicate forms. First, to awaken, to satisfy the old prophetic definition of master and scholar—"him that awaketh and him that answereth;" then to interpret, to translate action and thought back into terms of personal values; and then to define, to take part with the pupil in this work of self-estimation. How necessary it is for the master to carry on his work in the scholar to some fit conclusion! Suppose that he stops with the awakening of the mind. What does the pupil really know of the new and strange stirrings of power within him? Who shall tell him what these things mean—what they mean to him? Who shall teach him how to judge of those increments or reductions of personal power of which he is conscious, even though they may follow manifestly from his own industry or from his own neglects?

Here comes in the most responsible, because it is the final, office of the teacher. I do not say that it is always to be exercised. Perhaps in the majority of cases it is better that we should not tell our pupils what we think of them. Our judgment may be premature; it may be an overestimation which may work harm; it may be a misjudgment for want of insight or for want of data. But when the fit time comes, and the sure judgment may be uttered, then it is wrong to withhold the estimate which may make the career, if not the life itself. "Where there is no counsel, purposes are disappointed: a word in due season, how good it is!"

I doubt if the majority of great men became great entirely of their own motion. It was a keener insight than their own which read the first signs of power. It was a stronger faith than their own which announced the future. If it were not for the encouraging service of

the teachers of our elementary and secondary schools in this process of self-estimation, we should have a vast increase in the amount of arrested development. I cannot put too great a value upon this supplementary work of the teacher for the scholar—this carrying him over into his own future, usually by giving him some vision of it. What is the profit of communicating knowledge upon knowledge to those whom we do not help to know themselves? How long will the outer knowledge last without the inner knowledge?

I said in the beginning that it was a part of the function of the school to aid in the transition from unconsciousness to simplicity, to start the movement that way; and I have tried to show how this is best accomplished by wise aids in the delicate art of self-estimation.

Let us keep the end in view, though our chief work may be at the beginning. Let us be patient with all necessary divergence from our task, or interference with it. Let us never for a moment suppose that simplicity means any suppression or reduction of power. It may mean the laying aside or getting rid of superfluous things. As an old-time professor once criticised one of my college classmates who had delivered an eloquent oration: "Blank, if you would lay aside your eloquence, you would make a fine speaker." But we must be patient even with eloquence, with exuberance of any kind, even unto waywardness if it is the result of power. Power we must have to make simplicity. Simplicity is the resultant of many powers, coming at last into harmonious action. As unconsciousness expresses the full child, simplicity expresses the full man. It expresses the man in his unity—nothing left out, nothing lost by the way, nothing denied its legitimate freedom; above all things, nothing sacrificed to selfishness. When a man, once a scholar, comes to that fine and powerful conclusion, and men ask how it all came about, for a teacher to be able to say to himself—to himself, not to others—"I know the way; I had a part in the result," is not that the teacher's reward?